

to again pursue her dream of becoming a police officer.

The Neighborhood Block Captains Award was presented to Randy and Jan Joeckel for their work in their neighborhood, Hanover Manor. The Joeckels have diligently worked to maintain a safe and crime free neighborhood by organizing neighborhood watches and community meetings to help keep tabs of developing problems.

Jim Trenary Chevrolet was the recipient of the 2005 Crime Stoppers Business of the Year Award. Jim Trenary employees have been extremely active in the local community with various fundraising efforts to help out good causes. Jim Trenary Chevrolet has also been an invaluable tool to the St. Charles Police Department by providing cars to be used for surveillance and sting operations.

The 2005 Crime Stoppers Special Recognition Award was presented to Thomas Benton. After retiring from 20 years of service to the St. Charles Police Department, Thomas became the director of security for a local casino. Never one to forget his law enforcement skills, Thomas was able to help local authorities identify two suspects from two different bank robberies using casino surveillance tapes and testimony from casino employees.

St. Charles Suburban Journal reporter Jason Lee received the Crime Stoppers Media Relations Award. Jason's reporting on area crime was detailed and thorough and he helped create awareness for the program by including Crime Stoppers information in his articles. Jason also proved to be an asset to the St. Charles Police Department, as he helped out with leads on certain cases.

The 2005 Citizen Award was presented to Renee & Derrick Rivers, Colleen Clifford, John Hanley, Susan & Andy Quinones, Ann Walton, Ann Grice and Stacey Nelson. All of the Citizen Award recipients were actively involved in helping apprehending suspects and thwarting future crimes. And in one particular case, an infant's life was saved by arresting a mother for child abuse and endangerment.

I commend all these recipients and hope my colleagues share in my admiration for the Crime Stoppers. I encourage all Americans to learn more about this wonderful partnership.

THE ENDANGERED CHILDREN OF NORTHERN UGANDA

HON. CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 27, 2006

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, when current Ugandan President Yawer Museveni overthrew the murderous regime of the late Milton Obote in Uganda in 1986, many had hoped that their nation would finally emerge from the nightmares of the Obote and Idi Amin regimes. Unfortunately, yet another horror lay ahead for the people of northern Uganda.

Many in the Acholi community were alarmed at the sudden loss of power when Obote was overthrown, and Alice Lakwena formed the Holy Spirit Movement to fight for the Acholi people. Despite her promises that her followers would have immunity from the bullets of the Ugandan army, they were defeated two years later, and she fled to Kenya.

Meanwhile, Joseph Kony, believed to be Lakwena's cousin, took up the battle, forming a group known as the Lord's Resistance Army or LRA. The LRA is often said to be determined to rule Uganda according to the Bible's 10 Commandments. In reality, this group has a philosophy that blends elements of Christianity, Islam and traditional Acholi beliefs into a murderous world view that has terrorized Kony's own Acholi people and set back development in the North by years if not decades.

Over the last 20 years, as many as two million persons—an estimated 90 percent of the population of the Acholi area in northern Uganda—have been forced into internally displaced persons camps. More than 20,000 children have been forced to serve as either soldiers or sexual slaves for the LRA. Those children who have escaped kidnapping by the LRA are forced into the phenomenon known as night commuting, in which an estimated 50,000 children walk miles from the rural areas to towns in order to find relative safety in bus shelters, churches or even on the streets.

The impact of this war on Ugandans in the North, as reported by the Civil Society Organisations for Peace in Northern Uganda, is almost unbelievable:

—The rates of violent death in northern Uganda are three times higher than those reported in Iraq following the Allied invasion in 2003.

—Each month, nearly 3,500 Ugandans die from easily preventable diseases, extreme violence and torture;

—Each day, 58 children under the age of five die as a result of violence and preventable diseases.

—Three times more children under the age of five die in northern Uganda than in the rest of the country.

—One quarter of the children in northern Uganda over ten years of age have lost one or both parents.

—Half of the nearly two million internally displaced persons in northern Uganda are children under the age of 15.

—About a quarter of a million children in northern Uganda receive no education at all because of displacement and the fact that 60% of schools in northern Uganda no longer function due to the war.

Because of the war in the North, Uganda has developed a lost generation that has grown up in dire circumstances with fear and deprivation as their constant companions. Nearly half of all children in the northern town of Kitgum are stunted from malnutrition. They likely will never be able to recover what this war has cost them.

There is great concern that the Government of Uganda is insufficiently committed to improving the situation in northern Uganda. On at least two occasions when there appeared to be a chance for peace talks with the LRA—once in 1993 and again in late 2004–2005—the Government of Uganda launched offensives that ended any chance of peace and yet failed to end the terrorism of the LRA. More recently, the indictment of top LRA leaders by the International Criminal Court has effectively ended further peace efforts.

Because of its inability to end the LRA threat, the Ugandan government in 2003 began encouraging local leaders in northern and eastern Uganda to raise civilian militias to help protect civilians. Unfortunately, according

to a study done by the Alan Shawn Feinstein International Famine Center at Tufts University, these militias were hurriedly recruited, poorly screened and incompletely trained. Furthermore, known criminals are part of these militias, which also contain boys and girls less than 18 years of age.

The Feinstein Center study also reports that there is a widespread perception among individuals and organizations in northern Uganda that the government has malevolent reasons for not ending the war with the LRA. They include revenge against northerners for human rights abuses under previous governments and neutralization of political challenge from the North. In the Uganda elections held earlier this year, President Museveni's main opponent Kizza Besigye, won 80 percent of the vote in northern Uganda—a testimony to the government's unpopularity in the North.

Whatever the truth about the Government of Uganda's war effort, it is certainly a fact that not enough is being done to safeguard the endangered children of northern Uganda. With all the attention given to the genocide in Darfur, a similar crisis in northern Uganda has been eclipsed in both attention and resources.

Just as we have a moral obligation to rescue the suffering people of Darfur, we have a similar obligation not to ignore the terrorized population of northern Uganda. If the eyes and ears of the world are focused elsewhere, we must redirect them to Uganda's distressed northern population—especially the children. Uganda's future may depend on our efforts.

Regrettably, the phenomenon of child soldiers is not one confined to Uganda or Africa. It is a global tragedy in which as many as 300,000 children are involved in as many as 30 conflicts around the world. As in Uganda, children are used by governments or government-supported militias and rebel forces such as the LRA. Utilized in everything from combat to spying to clearing minefields, these children are often killed or maimed, and even those who can escape often find it difficult to reintegrate back into society. They desperately need our help.

To that end, I and some of my colleagues in the House and Senate are planning to introduce legislation shortly to address the issue of child soldiers. This legislation condemns the conscription, forced recruitment or use of children by governments or paramilitaries in hostilities and urges the U.S. Government to lead efforts to enforce existing international standards to end this horrendous human rights abuse.

This legislation would deny U.S. military assistance to 7 of the 26 nations believed to use children in their military forces: Burundi, Columbia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Paraguay, Sudan and Uganda.

RUSSELL KOLB

HON. JIM GERLACH

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, April 27, 2006

Mr. GERLACH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Russell Kolb for his 50 years of outstanding service to the Ridge Fire Company of East Vincent Township, Chester County Pennsylvania and the communities it serves.

In addition to his active membership in the Company for 50 years, Mr. Kolb is also a